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Trifles Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

A dreary farmhouse in 1916 America with Mr. and Mrs. Hale, Mr. and Mrs. Peters (Sheriff), and the County Attorney. Mrs. Wright is being accused of murdering her husband, and the women Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are gathering some belongings for her time in prison, and the men are investigating the scene.

2. What is the *intrusion*? Ie. What causes the dramatic action to race toward the end of the play?

When the women found the quilt and dead bird, they actually found the evidence the men were looking for and this was what caused the dramatic action to race. But the women never make it a point to emphasize the importance of these objects because the men did not care about the “womanly” objects and didn’t think they mattered to the investigation. The women never release this information to them.

3. What is the *unique factor*? Ie. Why has the playwright decided to choose this moment in time to move the dramatic action forward?

The unique factor is the fact that the women were there gathering her belongings in the first place. The men would have never snooped through the seemingly useless things.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that is to be answered by the end of the play?

Did Mrs. Wright murder her husband?

Would they find hard evidence that revealed her motive or anger?

Would the women tell the men what they had found?

5. There are many *forwards* that are designed to raise and hold your interest? Identify a few of them below.

The rocking chair, the quilt, the bread, the bird cage (then the bird), and the unkept house.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

The most theatrical moment was when the women were trying to hide what they had uncovered at the very end because at first they can’t fit the stuff in their pockets, so you think the cover is blown. But then they make the smart remark that Mrs. Wright was going to “knot” the quilt.. not quilt it. Which answers the dramatic questions.

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Feminism is a huge theme of the play, isolation, justice, patriarchy, freedom, and violence.

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

The men want the evidence, but the women stand in the way by masking it. Which is symbolic because of the idea of men being in control.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

It is said that women worry over “trifles” (like birds and quotes) which suggests that women do not worry about things of importance. This helps us understand the play because the women are actually the ones that solve the mystery which shows that they were focused on important things (the bird and the quilt).

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

Family isn’t very prominent in this play except for when children are mentioned. The women suggest that Mrs. Wright’s house wouldn’t be as dreary if there were kids around. The “family” relationships that are examined are the three marriages which all reveal that the husband is made to boss his wife around.